

Travel, Allowances & Subsistence

Travel, Allowances & Subsistence	Applies to all Council employees
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Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to provide clear and concise guidance for employees in their application for the reimbursement of expenses incurred for travel and subsistence, including car mileage. This policy also provides guidance on the application of season ticket loans and the cost of eye tests.

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1 Travel Allowances, Expenses and Oyster Cards

1.0 The Council will reimburse travelling expenses necessarily incurred by employees in the performance of their official duties. This practice allows for the payment of excess fares (calculated on public transport rates), or car mileage (with the appropriate authorisation). Employees may claim car mileage:

- where the place of work is inaccessible by public transport;
- where the use of a car is indispensable to the employee in the performance of their official duties;
- or where the hours or days of work make travel by public transport inappropriate.

1.1 Every effort should be made to use the cheapest method of transport available, where it is necessary. It is conceivable that in view of the inaccessibility of some of the borough's homes and the unsocial hours which employees may be required to work, the use of a car might prove a necessity. If the Director considers that the use of a car is necessary for the satisfactory performance of an employee's official duties, then the payment of mileage allowance is allowed.

1.2 While the Council does reimburse employees for fares incurred on official duties in the borough, it will not authorise payment where employees have purchased season tickets allowing unlimited travel in the area, which are used in these journeys, as they are not incurring additional costs.

1.3 Trade Union Business:

Travelling expenses for union business are not paid by the Council.

1.4 Attending Training Courses:

Where attendance at a training course or conference involves additional travelling costs, to those normally incurred travelling to work, the difference will be reimbursed. The cheapest method of transport available at the time of travel must be used unless there are exceptional circumstances. Employees who attend external short courses must be advised to obtain a travel warrant in advance when travelling by train.

1.5 Home to Office and Return:

Employees should not normally be reimbursed for travelling from home to their place of work on normal working days. There are situations where they are required to report directly to site from home on a working day, rather than their normal place of work. If the site visited is further from home than the normal place of work, then the employee is entitled to claim for the additional distance travelled, e.g. the difference between car mileage from home to the normal place of work and the site visited.

1.6 Where an employee is required to use their car for official business outside of normal working hours or is called back to work in an emergency, the mileage from home to work and return may be claimed. With regard to the mileage claim for outside of normal working hours, the line manager must ensure that the use of a car is essential to carry out the work effectively.

1.7 Employees who are required to work during the weekends, but are not required to use a car for official business once they are at their place of work, may claim the appropriate public transport fare (not car allowance), from home to work and return, except where the individual is in possession of a weekly/monthly season ticket, where additional fares will not be paid. This reimbursement is liable to tax and must be paid through payroll and not by petty cash. If a day off in lieu is taken, a claim for fares is not permitted.

To claim Fares, create an expense report in One Oracle Self Service under Newham Internet Expenses, selecting the relevant expense type from the dropdown menu (e.g. Public Transport).

1.8 Some employees who work on an early shift and have to return to work in the evening for a late meeting or function may not, unreasonably, wish to go home in between. Some jobs though conditioned to a 36-hour week, require actual hours of work to vary to meet the needs of the service. In such cases, line managers should use their discretion in deciding whether such journeys home are reasonable before approving claims. The line manager should also consider carefully whether car mileage or public transport is the appropriate reimbursement, bearing in mind the advice given above. The line manager should agree this with the employee in advance when agreeing the overtime or working arrangements.

1.9 Taxi / Mini Cabs: Judgement is required on the part of the line manager in considering whether non-car drivers should claim taxi or mini-cab fares home from evening meetings finishing after a specified time. The following factors should be considered when such requests are made:

- the time the meeting finishes
- the time of year (i.e. if it is dark outside when the meeting finishes)
- whether the location is isolated
- whether the taxi should take the employee home or to a convenient rail, tube or bus station
- an objective assessment of the vulnerability of the employee
- the employee's own view of their vulnerability
- the availability of lifts from other employees
- any special circumstances, i.e. concerns about recent reported attacks in the area.

1.10 It is not the intention that these factors should be used to find reasons not to approve reimbursement of taxi/mini-cab fares. They are rather to ensure that fair consideration is given to individual circumstances and a reasonable, justifiable decision taken on each case. These decisions are best taken by local management who will be aware of all the relevant facts.

1.11 Where applicable, VAT receipts should be retained for inspection.

1.12 Oyster Card Usage:

Oyster cards may be used for travel necessarily incurred by employees in the performance of their official duties.

It is the responsibility of employees to use Oyster cards sensibly in accordance with the principles set out in this policy and to ensure that local arrangements to record card usage is adhered to. It is a manager's responsibility to ensure that Oyster cards are used appropriately by members of their team.

Managers should keep local records of all Oyster cards that are registered to the employees within their teams or services. It is the responsibility of managers to ensure that appropriate measures are in place to monitor and record card usage. A review of card usage should be carried out on a weekly or monthly basis and this will depend on the frequency of journeys or the number of cards in use.

As a minimum local records should include:

- employee name
- date of journey

- details of journey (to and from)
- purpose of journey

Additionally, managers are responsible for registering Oyster cards used within their teams and services on the Transport for London (TFL) website so that card usage can be monitored. Travel records on TFL's website should match records kept locally. All travel record discrepancies must be regularly reconciled against internal records to ensure that cards are being used appropriately.

Oyster cards should not be used for non-business travel e.g. personal or social travel. Card misuse will result in action under the council's Disciplinary Procedure.

In the absence of the use of an Oyster card for business travel, employees may pay for the journey themselves and claim it back through expenses.

Employees must return Oyster cards to their line manager when leaving the council's employment. It is the responsibility of the line manager to ensure that the card is returned.

Compliance checks on the use of Oyster cards may be carried out by internal auditors. Managers should be prepared to provide travel records and evidence of monitoring and control measures to avoid the risk of card misuse.

2 Subsistence Allowances / Expenses

- 2.0** Subsistence allowances will be payable to employees who are prevented by their official duties from taking a meal at their home, administrative centre or establishment where they normally take their meals, and thereby incur additional expenditure. This applies to all Newham employees.
- 2.1** Meal Allowances: The basic criteria for payment of the allowance is that employees should not be placed at a financial disadvantage because they are on official Council business and that they should be fairly compensated for additional expenditure genuinely incurred.
- 2.2** To assess whether employees are entitled to this allowance, two points have to be considered;
- whether they have had to incur additional expenditure on the purchase of a meal; and
 - whether they will have been prevented from following their normal meal arrangements.
- 2.3** If an employee is required to work away from their normal place of work for a temporary period, whether it be in the vicinity of their normal meal arrangements, e.g. the Council canteen, they may be incurring additional expenditure. If this is the case, then as a result, claims for subsistence allowance should be paid up to the maximum of the appropriate allowance provided by national conditions.
- 2.4** Employees who are above the salary limit of LP07 for overtime and who are required to work until 8.30pm, may claim up to the maximum amount of subsistence allowance for tea. Those who work beyond 8.30pm may claim up to the maximum amount of subsistence allowance for an evening meal, irrespective of normal place of employment, the availability of a canteen or of the amount of expenditure required. Tea and evening meal allowances will not be paid in respect of the same evenings work, except on Saturdays or Sundays.
- 2.5** Employees up to LP07 who are working outside their normal working hours and receiving overtime payment may not claim any allowances or reimbursement of meal expenses incurred.

- 2.6** Employees up to LP07 who are working outside the normal working hours and are taking time off in lieu rather than receiving overtime payment, are entitled to claim the maximum amount of the appropriate allowance.
- 2.7** Subsistence allowances may be claimed by course members and course tutors on training courses within and outside the borough where expenditure is incurred.
- 2.8** To claim Subsistence, create an expense report in One Oracle Self Service under Newham Internet Expenses, selecting the relevant expense type from the dropdown menu (e.g. Tea Allowance).

3 Car Users

- 3.0** For financial and environmental reasons the use of cars for Council business should only be used where necessary and where alternative methods of transport are not available or practical. Where cars are used consideration should be given to the type of car (i.e. engine size / fuel efficiency) and the journey planning to ensure that the cost and mileage is kept to a minimum. Line managers and employees are advised to encourage the use of public transport, cycling and walking wherever possible. When consideration is given to the attachment of car allowances to an employee's post, alternatives should be considered such as bicycle allowances and/or making use of public transport travel passes such as an Oyster card. It is for Directors to determine which posts qualify for motor car allowances.

- 3.1** The Council operates a single car mileage scheme for all employees which adopts the HMRC approved rates of mileage.

3.2 HMRC Mileage Rates

The current rates of mileage that can be claimed are as follows:

Type of vehicle	First 10,000 miles	Above 10,000 miles
Cars and vans	45p	25p
Motorcycles	24p	24p
Bicycles	20p	20p

HMRC – 26th May 2020

3.3 Making a Claim

To claim mileage, create an expense report in One Oracle Self Service under Newham Internet Expenses, selecting expense type "Car mileage" from the dropdown menu. Please note that part miles cannot be claimed and that claims older than 2 months are automatically rejected.

3.4 Working outside of normal hours / Emergency Travel

Where an employee is required to use their car for official business outside of their normal working hours or is called into work in an emergency then the mileage from home to work and return may be claimed or the appropriate public transport fares may be claimed (except where an individual has a weekly/monthly/annual season ticket), with the line manager certifying that it was necessary for a car to be used for that journey.

3.5 Insurance

It is important that employees have included in their policy of insurance a clause indemnifying the authority against all third party claims (including those concerning passengers) arising out of the use of the vehicle on official business. Line managers will

need to retain this information.

3.6 Parking

When employees are on official business, they must park legally and responsibly. If an employee incurs parking penalties whilst on Council business, the penalty will be paid from the employee's salary and not the Council.

3.7 Tolls & Car Park charges

The cost of any Tolls and/or car park charges incurred whilst on official business can be reclaimed if accompanied by official receipts. To claim, create an expense report in One Oracle Self Service under Newham Internet Expenses, selecting expense type "Car Parking/Tolls" from the dropdown menu.

4 Motorcycle Allowances

4.0 The Council has a local agreement which provides for the payment of a Motor Cycle Allowance to employees where the use of personal transport for official duties is desirable but the use of a car is not warranted. Motorcycle Allowances are granted at the discretion of the Director and are subject to review from time to time.

Only mileage incurred on official business may be claimed; under normal circumstances journeys from home to the office are not permitted. In some instances, however, where an employee is required to go direct from home to a site other than their normal work place, any additional mileage over and above their normal home to office mileage may be claimed.

Note: Where an employee is required to use their motor cycle for official business at weekends outside the normal working week or is called back to work in an emergency, the mileage from home to work and return may be claimed. Employees in receipt of this allowance must not, at any time, carry passengers.

4.1 Allowance

The allowance is payable to employees whose required mileage is 500 miles or more per year.

4.2 Making a Claim

To claim mileage, create an expense report in One Oracle Self Service under Newham Internet Expenses, selecting expense type "Motorcycle mileage" from the dropdown menu. Please note that part miles cannot be claimed and that claims older than 2 months are automatically rejected.

4.3 Insurance

It is important that employees have included in their policy of insurance a clause indemnifying the authority against all third party claims (including those concerning passengers) arising out of the use of the vehicle on official business. Line managers will need to retain this information.

4.4 Parking

When employees are on official business, they must park legally and responsibly. If an employee incurs parking penalties whilst on Council business, the penalty will be paid from the employee's salary and not the Council.

5 Bicycle Allowances

- 5.0** The Council has a local agreement which provides for the payment of an annual bicycle allowance and bicycle mileage for employees who choose to use their bicycle for official duties in substitution of the car/motorcycle allowances. Employees who use their bicycle for official duties are entitled to receive an allowance to cover the cost of such use.
- 5.1** The bicycle mileage allowance is payable to employees and is paid as follows: -
- An amount per mile based on HMRC Mileage rates for work related journeys.
 - Mileage for each journey should be estimated and will be checked by the relevant Line manager for “reasonableness”.
 - Home to work travel is not allowed.
 - Employees who have a cycle on loan through the Cycle to Work Scheme cannot claim the bicycle mileage allowance.
- 5.2** To claim bicycle mileage allowance, create an expense report in One Oracle Self Service under Newham Internet Expenses, selecting expense type “Pedal cycle mileage” from the dropdown menu. Please note that part miles cannot be claimed and that claims older than 2 months are automatically rejected.
- 5.3** Employees who use their bicycle for official duties are entitled to receive the annual bicycle allowance which covers the cost of such use. The annual bicycle allowance is £30 per annum and is to be paid quarterly.
- 5.4** To request the payment of the annual bicycle allowance, complete the Bicycle Allowance application form (Appendix 10A) and pass to the authorising Line manager who will submit the details to Payroll for processing.
- 5.5 Insurance**

The Council will not be held liable for accidents or the theft of a privately owned bike which is used for Council business. It is the responsibility of the employee to ensure that they have the appropriate insurance cover when using their own bikes for Council business.

The Council strongly recommends that employees purchase a public liability insurance policy to cover themselves for any claims made against them.

*Cover may include bike theft, injury through bike defect, damage to property and or accidents involving a third party. Line managers will need to retain this information.

**This list is not exhaustive and is subject to the terms as stated in individual policies.*

6 Season Ticket Loans

- 6.0** Employees who come into work by public transport and need to buy an annual pass for use on the London transport network can apply for an interest-free season ticket loan from the Council. Please refer to the Season Ticket Loan policy in the below link:
- <http://lbn-intranet.lbn.newham.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/0B291EC9-74C7-45AE-A791-E6EF52BDFA83/0/SEASONTICKETLOANMarch2011.doc>
- 6.1** The Council processes personal data collected during the administration of a loan in accordance with its data protection policy. In particular, data collected as part of the loan policy is held securely and accessed by, and disclosed to, individuals only for the purposes

of processing a loan application.

7 Eye Tests

- 7.0** Any employee of the Council who uses Display Screen Equipment (DSE) is entitled to have an eye test, where the cost of any such test is met by the Council. The NHS recommends that most people should get their eyes tested every 2 years.

An average eye test will take around 30 minutes. Many opticians now offer free eyesight tests, but if they do charge for an eyesight test then the typical cost is £20.

Some employees automatically qualify for a free eye test, please refer to the below link:

<https://www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/Healthcosts/Pages/Eyecarecosts.aspx>

- 7.1** In addition to the eye test the Council is also obliged to meet the cost of your prescription (glasses/contacts/etc.) ONLY where that prescription is specifically required in the use of DSE and not for general every day use.

The Council will reimburse up to a total amount of £70. This amount is to help towards the total cost of both the eyesight test and any corrective lenses that may be required for use with DSE. Please note that only the expenditure incurred (up to £70) will be reimbursed against receipts. Please refer to the Health & Safety Display Screen Equipment policy for more details:

<http://newhamintranet.lbn.newham.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/427184C2-B588-4F7B-B64C-0B0406F11358/0/DisplayScreenEquipmentPolicyDecember2013.pdf>

Further information for DSE users can be found on the following link:

<http://lbn-intranet.lbn.newham.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/6C69E024-A110-4738-ABAA-17B4B4F72F40/0/DSEGuidanceApril2013.doc>

- 7.2** Reimbursements of eye test fees (and prescription costs where applicable) must be made via the application form (see link below), which must be authorised by your optician and submitted to Employee Services. Please refer to the application form for further guidance.

<http://lbn-intranet.lbn.newham.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/097EC0C3-9F0C-4670-A366-58B22859E33D/0/EYETESTFORM.doc>

- 7.3** To make a claim, create an expense report in One Oracle Self Service under Newham Internet Expenses, selecting the relevant expense type from the dropdown menu (e.g. Eyesight Test Fees).